GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PRIME MINISTER
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:146
ANSWERED ON:08.12.1999
SAFETY MEASURES
CHANDRAKANT BHAURAO KHAIRE;SURESH RAMRAO JADHAV (PATIL)

Will the Minister of PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned `nuclear accident may occur anytime in India` appearing in the Times of India dated October 22, 1999;

(b) if so, the details of matter reported therein and the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(c) the safety measures being taken to safeguard the nuclear installations?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SMT. VASUNDHRA RAJE)

(a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUETION NO.146 REGARDING SAFETY MEASUR
S/SHRI CHADRAKANT KHAIRE & SURESH RAMRAO JADHAV FOR ANSWER ON 8.12.99

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) & (c) The news item atributes certain statements to Dr. A. Gopalakrishnan, former Chairman of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB). These statements were made in the background of an accident which happened in a uranium conversion facility in Japan.

The Indian plants for processing nuclear fuel and for reprocessing spent fuel are designed conservatively. Adequate safety margin is always provided to ensure that accidents do not occur. There are several levels of safety built into the design, construction and operation of these plants duly evaluated by a multi- tier regulatory mechanism of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board. Personnel who operate these plants are highly qualified and trained. Safety systems are engineered into the plants to prevent criticality accident. In view of these an accident similar to that which occured in Tikaimure is highly unlikely to happen in India.

However, the Safety Review Committee for Operating Plants (SARCOP) of AERB, which reviewed the Japanese accident has recommended, as a matter of abundant caution, that relevant plants should be subject to reexamination.

The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board is receiving all the required inputs from the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) unit to take decision of safety signifacance. AERB is able to enforce regulatory actions wherever found necessary. DAE units have always complied with AERB stipulations.

AERB report prepared in 1995 lists 134 safety issues in DAE installations. These have been followed up for implementation. Majority of these have been resolved. Implementation of the remaining is in progress.